

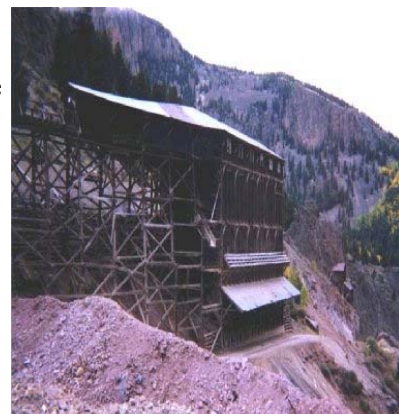


## WILLOW CREEK RECLAMATION PROJECT; CREEDE, COLORADO

### Community-Based Approach To Environmental Protection

Historically, mining provided economic viability to the area in and around the Creede mining district. However, esthetic, recreational, and natural resource values have been impacted. To address these concerns, the *Willow Creek Reclamation Committee (WCRC)* was founded as a citizens group in late 1997 to characterize mine-waste contaminant problems in the watershed and to develop and perform cleanup activities. The primary goal of the WCRC is to restore the natural environment in the Willow Creek flood watershed, and preserve the characteristics of the historic mining district.

Restoration plans are being developed that will preserve the character of the mining district and will help reduce the overall loading of contaminants to Willow Creek. Cleanup plans will also provide the basis for TMDL development by the Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment.

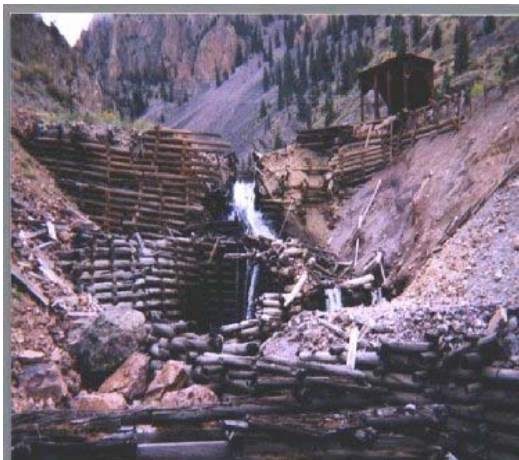


Historical Remnant of mine operations near Creede, CO.

**Setting and Environmental Threat:** Mining activities from the 1890's to the 1980's resulted in mine waste piles accumulating in the watershed and contaminated groundwater discharging through mine openings and flowing to nearby Willow Creek. Much of Willow Creek is now physically and chemically altered and cannot sustain populations of fish and other species.

**Agency Assistance:** One of the highlights of this project is how government agencies have provided assistance to the Committee by responding to requests with in-the-field expertise and various grant opportunities. Specifically, several Federal and State of Colorado agencies are developing partnerships and trust with the local community by participating in various activities including:

- USFS funded ground-water contamination studies.
- NRCS designing stream-channel reconstruction.
- Colorado Department of Minerals and Geology 1) stabilization of mine waste piles, 2) underground characterization.
- CDPHE providing CWA Section 319 funding, Brownfields assessment work, and Voluntary Cleanup Program assistance
- USGS sampling the Rio Grande River and stream tracing
- USACE fixing flume through Creede .
- USFWS and the Colorado Division of Wildlife assistance to characterize aquatic conditions and determine aquatic standards
- EPA provides technical support for ground water and surface water sampling, grant money to perform mine reconnaissance and help with overall project management



Willow Creek

For more information about EPA's support for the Willow Creek Reclamation Committee, Mike Wireman, 303-312-6719 or email [wireman.mike@epa.gov](mailto:wireman.mike@epa.gov)